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ABSTRACT

Fundamental change took place in Australian education policy during the period from the early 1970s to the 1990s. These changes were paralleled by the establishment and abolition of the Schools Commission (1973-88). The establishment of the Schools Commission marked a period in Australian politics when education was a priority. The Schools Commission was a casualty of the Hawke Labor Government's micro-economic reform, which accompanied a trend toward economic rationalism and human capital theories. The rise and fall of the Schools Commission provides an example of the change that occurred in the ideological legitimations of education policy during the period--from education for equity to education for efficiency; from social democracy to economic rationalism. The book is organized into three sections. The first section examines public policy in Australia with a focus on the political and ideological dimensions. It discusses the interaction between politics and ideology, and the manner in which ideology frames the political and the policy decision-making process, limits the legitimate policy options under consideration, and shapes the policy-making process itself. The second section offers a case study of the emergence and decline of the School Commission. The final section examines Commonwealth policy directions for education and training in the post-1987 period in both compulsory and post-compulsory schooling, and in higher education. One figure, three tables, and an index are included. (Contains 299 references.) (LMI)

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